

Remarks

The specification is amended, as indicated above, to remove all occurrences of the word “means”.

Claims 1 and 8 are amended in order to more clearly define the claimed invention. Support for the amendments is found in the specification at page 5, lines 20 to page 6, line 2.

It is believed that this response is fully responsive to the Office Action of January 4, 2005. Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter is added.

The present invention is a hanger for use in a strip door system for supporting vertically hanging flexible plastic strips, each strip having a row of uniformly spaced apertures along an upper end portion. The hanger has an elongated backing plate portion for mounting the hanger to a structure above an opening, a plurality of uniformly spaced studs fixed along the length of the backing plate for supporting the plastic strips by engagement of the studs through the strip apertures, and an elongated retaining plate for locking with the studs to prevent disengagement of the strips. Each of the studs has a plurality of locking means along its length for locking the retaining plate with the studs so as to provide an adjustable effective stud length between the backing plate and the retaining plate.

The present invention, in comparison with the strip curtain system of Finkelstein et al., provides for a much simpler procedure for replacing plastic strips, when required. In the present invention only the retaining plate needs to be removed in order to install new plastic strips. In the system of Finkelstein et al. the entire system, including the channel (backing plate) must be dismounted from supporting structure of a doorway, (for example), then two additional components,

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the male plate and the female plate, must be removed. The major step in the replacing procedure for the system of Finkelstein et al., that is dismounting the channel from the supporting structure, is necessary because all of the components, including the strips, must be slid into the channel from ends thereof, which in many installations are up against a door frame, a wall, or the like.

Also, the system of Finkelstein et al. does not enable changing the overlap of the hanging strips, if desired by the user, because of the unique cutout portion which is required at the top of each strip. In order to change the overlap, the configuration of the cut out portion at the top of each strip must be modified. In the present system, the user is free to choose any incremental amount of overlap desired, without any modification to the shape of the strips.

Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 USC§102(b) as being anticipated by Finkelstein et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,520,237). Reconsideration and removal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

It is alleged in the Office Action that Finkelstein et al. sets forth a hanger having an elongated backing plate portion (25); a plurality of spaced studs (27) along the length of the backing plate; a retaining plate (26) for locking with the studs; each stud being cylindrically shaped and having a plurality of locking means comprising grooves having sidewalls perpendicular to the axis of the studs; the retaining plate having apertures (28) corresponding to the studs of the backing plate; a stiff elastic retaining disk (viewed as a surrounding portion of members (22) sliding over the studs; and backing plate mounting means (viewed as inclusive of its side edges).

Regarding Claims 1 and 8, it is respectfully submitted that the present claimed invention is non-obvious and distinct from the strip curtain system disclosed by Finkelstein et al. In the present claimed invention, studs (12) are fixed along the length of backing plate (9), which is provided for

mounting the hanger to a structure. It is alleged in the Office Action that “male plate” 25 of Finkelstein et al. corresponds to the claimed backing plate. It is respectfully submitted that in the strip curtain system of Finkelstein et al., “channel” (12) for mounting to a door frame (15), as discussed at column 2, lines 49-56, would correspond to the present claimed elongated backing plate, as the alleged backing plate (25) is not for mounting the hanger to a structure. It is presently claimed that the backing plate is for mounting the hanger to a structure. Channel (12) does not have uniformly spaced studs fixed along its length, as presently claimed.

Also, it is respectfully submitted that the alleged retaining plate (26) does not lock with studs (27) of Finkelstein et al., as presently claimed. A “groove” is shown in each stud (27) (see Fig. 2) of Finkelstein et. al., but the function of the groove is unclear. At column 3, lines 1-9 it is stated “the pegs 27 are grooved at one end for snap engagement with the holes 28.” In another reference to peg (27), Claim 1 recites “...a female plate with at least one hole sized to receive said male plate peg,...” Finkelstein et al. is not clear on the relative dimensions of the groove, the peg, and the hole of the female plate (26) and does not disclose that the alleged retaining plate (26) locks with studs (27), as presently claimed.

Additionally, it is respectfully submitted that each of the alleged studs (27) does not have a plurality of locking means along its length, so as to provide an adjustable effective stud length between the backing plate and the retaining plate, as presently claimed. Such claimed feature is shown in the present application at Figs. 2B-6B. The single “groove” of the alleged stud (27) would not provide this claimed feature.

Regarding Claim 3, it is respectfully submitted that the alleged retaining plate (26) does not

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have a plurality of apertures, each having a minor portion and a major portion which communicate, such apertures serving to lock the retaining plate on the studs by the force of gravity alone, as presently claimed. The alleged retaining plate (26) of Finkelstein et al. is provided with apertures having a circular cross-section.

It is respectfully submitted that in view of the above remarks, the present claimed invention is non-obvious and patentable distinct from the cited reference. In view of such distinction, removal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

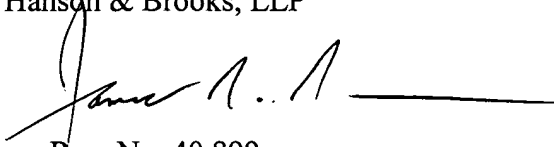
It is believed that Claims 1-8 are now in condition for allowance. Allowance of Claims 1-8 is respectfully requested.

If there are any issues of a minor nature remaining, the Examiner is urged to contact Applicant's agent, the undersigned, at Area Code (412) 281-2931.

In the event that any fees are due in connection with this paper, please charge our Deposit Account No. 16-0485.

Respectfully submitted,

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